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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

29 OCT 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

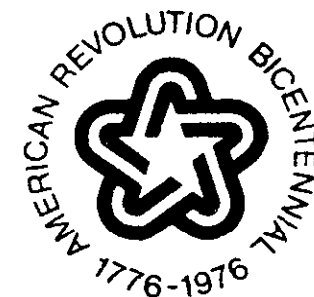
SUBJECT: Cuban Activities in Africa and Latin America:
October 1976 Update -- INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

~~(C)~~ Cuban and MPLA troops are meeting continuing difficulty in controlling the guerrilla activity of the insurgent groups in Angola. Fighting has often been intensive, involving Cuban use of MIGs and helicopter gunships for close air support, frequent insurgent ambushes and interdiction of lines of communication. Fighting is also heavy in the Cabinda enclave where 3,000 Cuban troops are reported to be deployed. UNITA insurgents are now planning a major offensive against government forces to begin in November. In a related development, the Soviet Union and Angola signed a 20 year peace and friendship treaty on 8 October 1976. Increased Soviet military assistance is a likely result. The Cubans will be tied down in Angola for some time until the situation is under control and until Angolan Government forces are adequately trained -- both formidable tasks.

~~(S)~~ We have not had further reports of Cuban support of guerrilla activity against Rhodesia. Like the insurgents Castro is apparently waiting to see the results of the Geneva negotiations. In the Namibia situation Cuban forces are helping to train SWAPO guerrillas from bases in Angola. Reportedly as a result of SWAPO leader Sam Niyoma's visit to Cuba this month, the Cubans agreed to supply weapons, ammunition and other military equipment from their stocks in Angola. There are significant constraints to the use of troops: their requirement for combat troops in Angola, the strength of South Africa, and the world sentiment that peaceful resolution of the Namibian independence issue is still possible. All reports indicate that commitment of resources to Africa is straining the Cuban economy, which in turn limits Castro's future plans.

~~(S)~~ Castro continues to move slowly and cautiously in Latin America. Covert operations do not appear to be of high priority at this time (although unconfirmed reports persist that they may still be taking place), probably because Castro wants to limit Latin concerns after the Angolan intervention, or because he is not convinced they will be productive. His present focus seems to be improving his image as a

Classified by ---DASD/EAPA/ISA---
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED
AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON 12-31-94



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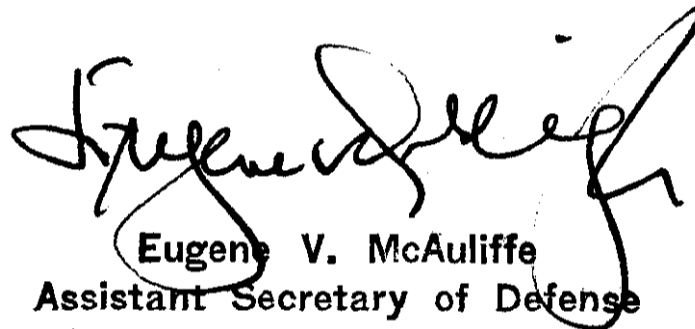
Cuba 1976

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third world leader and creating anti-US sentiment in the region. He recently tried to have the UN Committee of 24 take action on the Puerto Rican independence issue; as widely reported in the press, he recently publicly abrogated the anti-hijacking agreement, accusing the CIA of being involved in the crash of a Cuban airliner. The alleged CIA involvement in the crash has inflamed certain Latin American countries, particularly Guyana. This issue is becoming more serious each day and could have adverse impact on our diplomatic relations with several Latin American nations. On the economic front Castro continues to try to gain access to western technology.

~~(S)~~ In sum Cuba seems to be holding steady: careful ly watching world sentiment, particularly in Latin America, while trying to solidify Neto's position in Angola. Expanded Cuban military involvement will depend upon the collapse of Rhodesian peace initiatives, increasing world sentiment that a military solution to majority rule is the only possible one, and some economic relief from Cuba's current African burden.



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